

1721
Missionary pers.

WORLD RECONSTRUCTION PAPERS

Second Series—No. 1

My Place in the
World's Work

By
GALEN M. FISHER

STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT

25 Madison Avenue, New York

1920



GALEN M. FISHER is National General
Secretary of the Young Men's Christian
Association in Japan.

MY PLACE IN THE WORLD'S WORK

GALEN M. FISHER.

When Booker Washington, ragged and ungainly, applied for admission to Hampton College, and for work to pay his way, the New England schoolma'am who was examining applicants asked him what he could do. Booker's repertoire was severely limited, but he replied that he could clean a room. She set him to work on a schoolroom, with the result that even she could find no dust as she rubbed her handkerchief along the ledges. That was Booker's entrance examination.

Matriculation today into the great college of world service is based on a similar test—the will to put the best there is in us into the task. The most striking thing about the service is that there is a task and career for every kind of talent and training. Fifty years ago the possible varieties of foreign missionary work were limited to the ministry, medicine and teaching. Today it would be hard to name a respectable occupation which can not be turned to good account in the Christian movement abroad. Almost any man or woman with a well-poised mind in a sound body, with a living Christian character and an intense desire to have

other men share his faith and knowledge, can be utilized on the vast plantation of the mission field.

FROM SHIP CAPTAIN TO MISSIONARY

Seamanship, for example, might not be looked upon as likely to open a career in missionary service in Japan. Yet that unlocked the door to Captain Luke Bickel, the Fukuin-maru (Gospel Ship) skipper-apostle. With Yankee ingenuity and a shrewd knowledge of the human heart gained by years at sea, he gradually won the confidence of the conservative dwellers of the Inland Sea, and within fifteen years developed a staff of Japanese workers and a chain of churches and regular stations where hardly one had been before. Although he began his missionary career in middle life, so determined was he to tell about Christ that he won a fluent command of the Japanese language and preached to high and low with power.*

PUTTING RELIGION INTO THE SOIL

Nor does agriculture at first thought seem to offer a hopeful means for spreading Christianity. Yet in India Professor Sam Higginbottom, and in China Professor Joseph Bailie have found in it a master key to the confidence of officials and land owners and a

*Captain Bickel of the Inland Seas. C. K. Harrington, Revell, N. Y.

means to lighten the economic burdens of the common people and win a welcome for Christian teaching.

A unique, almost romantic, application of agricultural and economic science combined with brotherliness is being worked out for the redemption of the people of South India. The case is this: A down-trodden peasantry, ignorant and superstitious, are hopelessly in debt to Parsee money lenders who exact from 25 to 100 per cent. interest. Preaching and teaching alone will not touch them. Some Young Men's Christian Association secretaries, brilliantly adapting the County "Y" experience in America, make the triangle into a square by adding an economic side. They organize all the heads of houses in village after village into Farmers' Loan and Improvement Societies through which any member can borrow at 7 per cent. from the Cooperative Christian Central Bank of Madras. All the members in each society go bond for the borrowers. Government inspectors audit accounts. As soon as financial rehabilitation is assured, the villagers are ready for night schools and simple lectures. As soon as the burdens are off their backs, their heels feel light and they want to play group games and sing and have the care-free recreation that premature labor robbed them of in youth. Then as the culmination of it all they listen gladly to the Gospel as it is presented by those who have already redeemed them from debt and want.

BUSINESS AGENTS

The mention of this economic approach in Christian work suggests that there is a demand for a few men and women of business training to serve as financial and general business agents on the field. In China many of the missions have such agents and at Shanghai a number of them have united in forming a joint business office.

MULTIPLYING PERSONALITY

There are calls in the mission field for teachers of well-nigh all the subjects that are offered in the high school and college curricula of North America. Increasingly the demand is for teachers of the most thorough professional training, because the educational standards in countries like Japan and China and India already approximate those in America. But hard as the mission boards find it to secure candidates who are professionally competent, they find it even harder to secure candidates who are like springs of living water spiritually. And it is only those two elements vitally combined in magnetic Christian personality that warrant the churches of North America in sending men and women as teachers to those advanced nations, which lack not intellectual culture but the dynamic of victorious character.

But the central task of every man or woman who

goes across the deep, whether to preach or to plow, to teach or to doctor for Christ, is to become, like Jesus Himself, a teacher of teachers, a trainer of leaders. One of the greatest of missionaries, judged by this test, was Dr. S. R. Brown, of Yokohama. Among that first group of ambitious Japanese lads who braved obloquy and learned English and the Bible at his feet are to be numbered Bishop Honda, the first Japanese Bishop, and the intellectual and spiritual leaders of the Presbyterian Church.*

The extraordinary multiplicative power of the lay teacher-missionary finds notable illustration in the case of Professor William S. Clark, who went to Japan fifty years ago. In 1874 the Japanese Government called him from the Massachusetts State Agriculture College to found Japan's pioneer agricultural college at Sapporo. They requested him to teach ethics also, but without using the Bible. He declared that for him ethics and the Bible were inseparable, and that if he were forbidden to use the Bible, he must courteously, but firmly, decline to teach at all. The officials yielded. The result was that though he spent but ten months there, a score of the brightest men in the first class were converted, and today they are passing on the torch in many professions: Dr. Sato is president of that same college, now become the Northeast Imperial

*A Maker of New Orient. W. E. Griffis, Revell, N. Y.

University; Dr. Nitobe, professor of colonial administration in Tokyo Imperial University, is influencing tens of thousands by his writings; Professor Miyabe is Japan's most eminent teacher of botany; and Mr. Uchimura, the author of "The Diary of a Japanese Convert," is the most widely read Biblical teacher in the Empire. To this day "President Clark" is revered by the students and alumni of Sapporo and his words are quoted like Holy Writ. Yet he was there less than a year.

A CAMPAIGN OF FRIENDSHIP

It should be noticed that in this instance it was intensive work with small groups that brought such marvelous results. Even though it would be absurd to say that public preaching should be given up and all effort concentrated on individuals and groups, it is at least true that in the foreign field as well as at home personal work is highly productive and is literally indispensable. If by any misfortune one of the two had to be cut out of missionary work, it would not be group and personal work. Hence no student need worry as to finding a place in the field because he is slow of speech or unimpressive as a preacher. William Borden, the Princeton volunteer, was famous as the "millionaire missionary," but had he lived longer it is altogether likely that he would have become famous as a winner of souls in China. For at college and dur-

ing his study of Arabic in Cairo, wherever he happened to be, he was a live wire in individual work.

Howard A. Walter, of Princeton and Hartford, may seem at first to have been too much of a genius to be a model for the average man. It is true that during his all too brief service in India he became one of the few authorities on Islam and at the same time he stirred thousands of students by his articles in "Young Men of India," and thousands more in other lands by "My Creed" and other poems. But one of his intimates told the writer that he remembered Walter above all else as a radiant friend and lover of men. He was an unaffected but irresistible soul-winner. The encouraging point is that although few men can hope to equal him as a scholar or a poet, it is perfectly practicable for everyone to emulate his untiring eagerness to lead men to the great Friend.

BUILDING MEN AND BUILDINGS

Mackay of Uganda showed to what good account engineering knowledge could be turned in Christian pioneering, but it remained for an American volunteer in Japan, William Merrell Vories, to show how architecture may be used to build the Kingdom. He was engaged in 1905 to inject English conversation into the five hundred boys in a provincial government commercial school at Hachiman, Omi, a sufficiently dull and dispiriting job, unless transfigured

by a divine motive. Within a year a group of students gathered in his lodgings to study the Bible, and despite taunts and persecution at home and school, a handful of the boys became Christians. Their light could not be hid. Converts multiplied. The Buddhists stirred up a province-wide agitation against this missionary disguised as a teacher, and the Governor reluctantly declined to renew the teacher's contract. Did he meekly leave, accepting it as a sign that he should return to America? Reduced to a few cents, he bethought him of his hobby in college, architectural drawing, and gradually built up an architectural business incorporated as W. M. Vories & Company, which requires a staff of a dozen Japanese and two American associates. Side by side with the business and largely supported by it, there has grown up the hundred-handed Omi Mission, which is not only evangelizing all parts of the hitherto neglected province of Omi, but is also carrying on one of the most original and valuable experimental laboratories of missionary method to be found anywhere. The whole mission—the building department, the farm, the tubercular sanatorium, the student dormitory, the railway Young Men's Christian Association Club, the women's work, the magazine, and the preaching launch, Galilee Maru, on Lake Biwa, are all saturated with the same devotion to Christ which impelled the founder. The

Mustard Seed sown in Omi fourteen years ago has become a fruitful tree.*

The huge funds recently raised by the various churches in the United States will lead to extensive building on the foreign field—schools, residences, hospitals, churches, social settlements and hostels. It is therefore altogether likely that there will be more opportunities abroad for trained architects and building superintendents who covet a chance to make their talents count directly for the Kingdom of God and who are willing to go out on a missionary basis. Mr. E. F. Black and Mr. W. W. Wiant have abundantly demonstrated the value of such service by what they and their Chinese assistants have done under the name of The Foochow Construction Company.

JUMPING HURDLES

A modern instance of a hindered volunteer who climbed over all obstacles and “made good” was Raymond P. Gorbald, of Lane Theological Seminary. A weak heart properly enough led to his rejection by the Presbyterian Board, but he said he would rather die young in Japan than become old in America. So he accepted a call from the Young Men’s Christian Association to teach English in a Government High School in Yamaguchi. He was a man of aver-

*A Mustard Seed in Japan. Wm. Merrell Vories, Hachiman, Omi, Japan.

age endowment, except that he was fairly glowing with good cheer and with love for the souls of men. During his two year term he drew scores of students to his home to study the Bible and led many of them to Christ. Then he returned to complete his theological studies and once more applied to the Board. This time he was accepted, and sent back rejoicing to Japan. The circles of his influence kept widening until after ten years, when he was called up higher, he was the mainspring of a network of activities in Kyoto, the old capital, including Sunday Schools, a church and dormitory for university students, a kindergarten and several men's Bible classes. He well exemplified some of the distinctive things a missionary can contribute even in a country like Japan where the native pastors are able and highly educated—training workers not by lecturing to them but by being a yoke-fellow with them, resourceful pioneering in new fields and forms of work, sticking to a job with radiant courage amid lonely and trying circumstances, because of a tested faith in God Immanuel, re-enforced by the consciousness of a great home church and generations of Christian forebears.

Thus far our illustrations have applied chiefly to men, but it would be easy to give as varied illustrations from the careers of women in world service. In Japan (with which the writer is best acquainted) it is well known that some of the finest work among

young men has been done by high-souled missionary women. One thinks of Miss Eliza Talcott, who, beside being the founder of Kobe Women's College, was the mother confessor of scores of Japanese pastors and who spent countless hours writing letters to men who were groping toward Christ. She was one of that small group of undiscouragable intercessors who believed that Pastor Kanamori would return to the Church,—and he did, though after she had been called home. Today he is Japan's most powerful evangelist.

Among many other examples are Miss Buzzell and Miss Bradshaw, who are still working at Sendai, that mine of Christian leadership. Today their old "boys" have become professors and lawyers and pastors and engineers all over the Empire. Among them is that most influential leader of the democratic and liberal movement, Dr. Yoshino, professor of politics in Tokyo Imperial University.

The invaluable services of women in education and house to house evangelism and Bible school teaching are too well known to call for special mention. It is often forgotten, however, how potent an influence is exerted by those self-forgetful mothers who create that masterpiece, a Christian home, and amid untoward surroundings nurture children into the family of God. This alone is a high and difficult achievement. All the more impressive, therefore, is it to see some such busy mothers supervise

schools and Bible women, and make time to mother the wives of evangelists and teachers. In South India Mrs. L. R. Scudder, of the Dutch Reformed Mission, added to all these other activities the teaching of lace-making as a means of self-support for the women in the Bible Training School. She learned the art herself during a fortnight's delay between steamers in China. The oldest son of this lady, by the way, has just sailed for India to become a medical missionary, the fourth in direct line from that pioneer medical missionary, Dr. John Scudder, who is known as the "grandfather of the Student Volunteer Movement."

MENDERS OF BODY AND SPIRIT

It would be hard to overstate the value of medical work abroad in any field one happens to name. Dr. Christie* of Mukden and his understudy, Dr. Arthur Jackson,† that brilliant Scotch Student Volunteer who gave his life fighting the pneumonic plague, have rendered a humanitarian service which potentates have been glad to honor and a religious service which needs no praise from men. The rising standard of medical equipment and teaching made possible in China by the Rockefeller Medical Board offers the ambitious medical Volun-

*Thirty years in Mukden. Mrs. Dugald Christie. Constable.

†The Life of Dr. Arthur Jackson of Manchuria. Alfred J. Costain. Hodder & Stoughton.

teer assurance that the missionary movement stands for the wedding of the most advanced science with the most effective religion.

SOCIAL ENGINEERS

Men and women who have caught the social vision will find that the industrial revolution has burst upon the Orient, creating the same problems and calling for the same remedies as in the Occident. Japan is taking such strides in manufacturing and trade and shipping that Greater Tokyo with its belts of factories is the fourth city in the world, with three and a half million people. Unlike those of Saturn, these belts are not light, but dark with the shadow of the evils which follow when tens of thousands of country folk are drawn into the raw factory suburbs, kept at high-powered machinery for eleven to thirteen hours a day, robbed of the fresh air and the neighborhood recreation and the moral bracing of their rural homes. Similar developments are taking place in other parts of the Orient. But quite apart from these more startling modern social problems, there are deep-rooted social evils in all mission lands which will be cured only when the best scientific method and the strongest Christian motive are both brought to bear upon them.

Here is the vocation for some of those men and women who have been set aflame with social pas-

sion by prophets like Rauschenbusch and Harry Ward and Washington Gladden. But first of all let the need abroad be clearly grasped. It is not for sociologists, but for Christian social engineers. The universities of non-Christian lands will turn out scientific social experts in abundance, but the Christian movement must supply the indispensable sympathy and the character-making redemptive forces. First or last the social welfare institutions and movements that are to abide and bear fruit must derive their power from Jesus Christ.

Japan—to name but one field—is in urgent need of a few missionaries able to make social surveys, to create successful settlements and working men's clubs, and to make these institutions training schools for social leaders. Thus far missionaries have seldom been qualified to do such work. But they have been forced into it by the appalling need, lest the plastic moment be forever lost. Merle Davis, of Tokyo, for instance, had specialized in history, but when he was asked five years ago to write an article for *The Japan Evangelist* on "The Occupation of Tokyo," he studied the facts and the facts forced him to tell the missions and churches that not a single missionary was living among the nine hundred thousand people on Tokyo's lower East Side. And not in vain, for already four agencies have begun work in that district.

HOW NOT TO DO IT

One danger today is that in the general enthusiasm for social work poorly qualified missionaries will attempt it, and ill-conceived, overlapping agencies will be born, only to pine away after a period of forced respiration. Another grave danger is that such social institutions will be exotics, foreign in plan, in support and in management. It would be far wiser for a while to have only a few well-planned institutions, as demonstration and training centers, conducted from the first in partnership with the native leaders. One example of an institution so conceived is the social settlement recently projected by Miss Caroline Macdonald, the former Canadian student leader, for that hotbed of poverty and vice and crime, Asakusa Ward in East Tokyo. The project has grown out of years of effective social-religious work. Some of the ablest Christian Japanese leaders are joint partners in the whole enterprise and they have undertaken to raise a fourth of the \$300,000 required to establish it.

NEW WORLD BUILDERS

The missionary must shun even the appearance of evil when it comes to meddling in the politics of other nations. And yet he finds himself a part of the most powerful international and inter-racial constructive force that the world has ever known, the missionary movement. For a century it has

been laying the subterranean piers on which must rest any league of nations which is to prevent more wars than it causes. For apart from the Christian motive the ideal of international co-operation has never been more than an irridescent dream. It is touching these underlying moral issues that every missionary has a real part to play in the thickening international drama, and to some it is given to play leading roles. It would not be difficult to name a score of missionaries who as faithful ambassadors of Christ have exerted a decisive influence for righteousness and fair play and brotherliness among the nations.

These are no times for petty private plans. Men must think in terms of humanity and of God. The entire social and international life of mankind is in convulsion. Who is sufficient for these things? Like a battle cry we hear Paul's ringing words, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The Christian college student who plots life on any lower plane will drift into one of the side eddies, while the main stream moves majestically on toward the larger Purpose.

